



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

24th October 2015

LECH LECHA 11th Cheshvan 5745

Kohen - First Aliya:

Page 60, Chapter 12, verses 1-13

- ✚ Hashem commands Avram to leave his place of origin (Haran) and journey to a place which Hashem will show him. Once there Hashem promises him that His descendants will become a great nation.
- ✚ Avram obeys and leaves Haran; accompanied by his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot and journeys towards the land of Canaan.
- ✚ Upon arrival they see a great famine has struck the land, leaving Avram and his entourage no choice but to continue on and travel down to Mitzraim (Egypt) instead.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Page 62, Chapter 12, Verse 14 – Chapter 13, Verse 4

- ✚ Due to Sarai's amazing beauty, The Egyptians kidnap her and hand her over to Pharaoh.
- ✚ To spare his life Avram deceives Pharaoh's men that Sarai was his sister and not his wife.
- ✚ When a Plague hit Pharaoh and his household. Pharaoh realised the truth and handed back Sarai to Avram ordering them to vacate the land of Mitzraim along with Lot and all their wealth and possessions.

Shlishi - Third Aliya:

Page 64, Chapter 13, Verses 5- 18

- ✚ Arriving back in Canaan, both Avram and Lot had amassed so many herds and flocks there was not enough land to graze them all in the same area and an argument erupted amongst the shepherds. Avram knew the time had come for Lot and himself to part company.
- ✚ Avram gave Lot first choice of where he would like to go and settle down and Avram would travel in the opposite direction. Lot made the decision to dwell in the land of Sodom.

R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:

Page 66, Chapter 14, Verses 1- 20

- ✚ War broke out; with the armies of 4 kingdoms on one side against 5 other kingdoms on the other.
- ✚ During battle, news reaches Avram via the giant Og that Lot has been taken captive.
- ✚ With only a handful of students and servants; Avram helps the five kingdoms to defeat the 4 and was able to rescue his nephew from certain slavery or even death.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Page 70, Chapter 14, verse 21 – Chapter 15, Verse 6

- ✚ Avram refuses any spoils of war handed to him by the king of Sodom.
- ✚ In a vision Hashem promises Avram that one day soon he is destined to have a son and his descendants will be numerous like the stars in heaven.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Page 72, Chapter 15, Verse 7

-Chapter 17, verse 6

- ✚ The 'Bris Bain Habesarin' (Covenant of the Parts takes place). Hashem assures Avram even though his descendants will face a multitude of hardships and Golus (Exiles). They will ultimately inherit the Land of Israel.
- ✚ Avram Marries Hagar (Sarai's maidservant) who bore a son to him called, Ishmael.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Page 79, Chapter 17, Verses 7 - 27

- ✚ Avram has his Bris Milla at the age of 99 and Ishmael also at the age of 13
- ✚ Hashem changes Avram's name to Avraham and Sarai's to Sarah.

Haftorah – YISHAYAH (ISAIAH) Chapter 40 verse 27 to Chapter 41 verse 16

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ The prophet Yishayah addresses Israel's complaint: "My way of serving G-d has been ignored by the Lord, and from my G-d, my judgment passes [unrewarded]"
- ✚ The Haftorah then turns its attention to the idolatrous nations of the world where Yishayah reminds Israel of the creator's greatness and how he promises to protect his children from the onslaught of trying to destroy us.

GEMATRIA LINKED TO THE SEDRA:

- ✚ There is a hint that Hashem's chosen nation would stem from Yitzhak and not Yishmael. When Hashem changes Avram's name to Avraham. Twice in the conversation, Hashem tells Avraham that he will be a **אב המון** Av Hamon (the father or many). The gematria for this phrase is 104. If you times this by 2 you will notice it equals to the same gematria of **יצחק** (Yitzhak) which is 208.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Relationship disputes and reconciliations seems to be a running theme that flows throughout this week's sedra in abundance. I would like to concentrate on one of them concerning Sarah and Hagar. As we know Avraham and Sarah after years of being married were still unable to have children. Feeling responsible and after consulting with her husband first, Sarah convinces Hagar to become Avraham's second wife in order to fulfil Hashem's promise of Avraham becoming the father of nations. Everything seems to be rosy. Hagar marries Avraham and conceives just as Sarah had hoped but suddenly Hagar's warmth and attitude towards Sarah changes.

Rashi points out that at this point, considering that she was now going to be the 'mother of all nations' and not Sarah; Hagar felt that as Sarah was not worthy to conceive from Avraham. It would be demeaning to still be employed as Sarah's maidservant and therefore should be treated at least as Sarah's equal if not better'. Because of this Hagar runs away only to be confronted by an angel instructing her to go back and submit herself under Sarah's hands.

Quoting Rav Yosef Salant, I heard an interesting insight relating to this incident. Hagar found working as a maidservant to be condescending and abusing because she made the mistake of not knowing who she was. Her life, at that point, was to be in Sarah's employ and to learn from her spiritual greatness. However, Hagar thought that she now had rights to do whatever she chose to be, especially as she was the one carrying Avraham's future offspring.

This is why Hagar in response to the angels request, explained that she had fled from Sarah because of the persecution which was being imposed towards her and hoped that by running away Hagar, the maltreatment would stop. The angel retorted back that everyone has to undergo a certain amount of suffering in their lives and cannot escape from it. All torment in which people receive is all decreed by Hashem Himself, in order to right wrongs and make a man / woman spiritually perfect. The angel explained If Hagar continues to flee from this particular persecution" from Sarah, she would simply have to face it in another place or form. Therefore it would be better for Hagar to return back and remain with Sarah who was a righteous and sincere person, rather than to suffer pain and humiliation from someone else who was the complete opposite.

I believe this is a very important lesson to remember in life. Whenever something is going wrong, concerning ourselves, our family, or our community, we always try to blame either the "oppressor" or somebody else. We keep forgetting that we must focus on the possibility that maybe we are the ones who erred in some way and all Hashem wants from us is to accept the punishment in order to restore the balance, learn and spiritually grow from it.

Sometimes our Avodas Hashem (serving Hashem) seems to be too difficult to achieve, therefore we need to remind ourselves of our proper place. We are his servants! Performing his commands! We were not put on this earth to chase after our materialistic goals, but rather to serve Hashem' like it says in the Shema "with all our souls, all our hearts and all our might. When we recognize our role in this world, our Avodas Hashem becomes that much easier.

Hagar's ego became a little too inflated for her own good, and therefore she perceived that Sarah was oppressing her when she wasn't doing anything of the sort. When we do something wrong, either against Hashem or other people, and we do not sincerely repent, suffering will come about. It's important to realize that when oppression strikes, we cannot fool ourselves into thinking that we can run away. We must take a deep look inside of us, and see what we can correct and make amends in order to put it right.

